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ABSTRACT

Intended for teachers, administrators, school board members, or parents, the standards presented in this booklet may be used both as a guide in constructing a total reading program and as a guide for examining an already existing program. Following an introduction, the ten standards are outlined, then presented in greater detail, along with the rationale behind each. The standards cover the following components of a reading program: (1) school district philosophy, (2) curriculum, (3) instruction, (4) evaluation, (5) special services, (6) reading specialists, (7) classroom staff competencies, (8) staff development, (9) budget, and (10) records and reports. The guide concludes with information on two resources to facilitate the use of the standards. (HTH)

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Statement of Standards For Reading Instruction

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1974-78 Co-Chairing:

Thomas Fitzgerald
State Education Department

Achille DeBerardinis
Rush-Henrietta

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Thomas Battista
Amsterdam
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PREFACE

Developing literacy is a process of enabling learners to master the skills of communication. In order for the student to achieve mastery, our schools must offer programs that respond to the needs of the individuals to be served.

Resources, values, interests, ability ranges, teacher proficiency, administrative commitment and quality of community participation are but a few of the many aspects to be explored as reading programs are developed to serve these needs.

The Reading Standards project was conceived out of an expressed need for self-evaluation and comprehensive planning at local school levels in order that significant advances in literacy could be facilitated. In collaboration with the Bureau of Reading of the State Education Department, and its Right to Read effort, the New York State Reading Association produced this document.

In a time of growing national concern for the quality of student achievement in reading, educators seek to research the effectiveness of their practices. This monograph was designed to assist you in this exercise.

We invite you to participate in this guided tour of your reading program, to examine your goals and to assess your competencies.

Gretta Kipnis
President

February 1978

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INTRODUCTION

This report on the Statement of Standards for Reading Instruction of the Standards Committee of the New York State Reading Association is intended to be used by teachers, administrators, school board members, or parents who are interested in examining the structure and effectiveness of their school's reading program. The Standards may be used as a guide in constructing a total reading program where the need to do so exists. More realistically, this report should serve as a guide for the examination of an already existing reading program. The standards set forth in the report represent the Association's thinking about the minimum requirements for a reading program whose purpose is to serve all students in a district.

The New York State Reading Association has not attempted to provide a definitive outline for a district's reading program. This report is intended to be used as a guide, since it merely lists and gives reasons for the concerns that schools and communities should have in developing effective kindergarten through grade twelve reading programs.

For example, the first standard sets forth the concept that each district should have a philosophy of reading. The Association does not wish to imply that districts have the same philosophy. The philosophy of a district, as well as the other aspects of a reading program, must grow out of the needs and values of the local district, and it should represent the consensus opinion of school personnel and community representatives.

The standards set forth in the next section constitute the minimum requirements or standards of any reading program. How effectively they have been met has to be determined on a local level. To that end, it is hoped that this Statement of Standards will serve as a stimulus and a guide for each district to review and improve its reading program.

STANDARDS FOR READING INSTRUCTION

1. ***Topic*** District Philosophy

   Standard There shall be a philosophy of reading instruction which is in keeping with the district philosophy of education, constructed on valid educational theory and in harmony with the values of the community.

2. ***Topic*** Curriculum

   Standard There shall be a clearly stated, written curriculum, which specifies general strands in reading such as word recognition skills, vocabulary development skills, comprehension skills, study and locational skills, reading rate and oral reading skills. Within each strand there should be a sequential listing of skills that identifies goals for students by specific performance objectives. This scope and sequence of skills can be used as the basis for a developmental program as well as for corrective and/or remedial programs.

3. ***Topic*** Instruction

   Standard There shall be continuous, direct and sequential instruction in reading at all levels and in all subject areas. It should be based upon a clearly stated, written statement of the district's program, which implements the reading curriculum. Such a statement shall contain diagnostic procedures and time allocations and the special services provided by the district.

4. ***Topic*** Evaluation

Standard There shall be an ongoing system of assessment at all levels of instruction which traces the reading performance of the students and the success of the instructional program in the attainment of the specified goals of the reading curriculum. Assessment should also be made periodically of the community's values and concerns to ensure that the goals and objectives of the reading program are reflecting these.

5. ***Topic*** Special Services

Standard There shall be special diagnostic and instructional services provided by qualified reading personnel for all students (K-12) who require special help in reading, such as children with reading/learning disabilities and students who fail to achieve in accordance with their academic potential. Additional special reading services should be provided to speakers of divergent dialects, speakers of English as a second language, as well as for those students deemed gifted and talented and those college-bound.

6. ***Topic*** Reading Specialists

Standard The school district shall employ reading specialists whose training meets or exceeds the requirements set by the New York State Department of Education and the International Reading Association. These specialists shall be responsible for: (1) intensive diagnostic services, (2) remedial and corrective instruction, (3) resource services to the administrators and teachers and (4) facilitation and coordination of the entire reading program.

A minimum number of such specialists might include: (1) a district coordinator or director of reading and (2) special reading teachers sufficient in numbers to service a workable unit such as a school building or a public population of 300-500 students, or a remedial/corrective student load of 30-40 students.

7. ***Topic*** Classroom Staff Competencies

Standard There shall be demonstrated competency by all classroom teachers in all phases of reading instruction -- assessment of pupil needs, planning of learning activities which meet these needs, evaluation of achievement, organization and management of the learning environment to facilitate learning -- and in addition, the possession of a caring attitude and the conviction that all children can learn to read.

8. ***Topic*** Staff Development

Standard There shall be an ongoing program of professional development and inservice training for all school personnel in the district to improve reading instruction at all levels.

9. ***Topic*** Budget

Standard There shall be a specific budget for each component of the reading program reflecting the importance of reading instruction within the total curriculum.

10. ***Topic*** Records and Reports

Standard The reading program shall incorporate an efficient system of recordkeeping and reporting, including: progress reports for parents; cumulative records for building staff; and group or building reports for central administrators. Such records should be concise and easy to maintain and interpret.

STANDARDS AND THEIR RATIONALE

1. ***Topic:*** District Philosophy

Standard

There shall be a philosophy of reading instruction which is in keeping with the district philosophy of education, constructed on valid educational theory and in harmony with the values of the community.

Rationale

To develop a sound, clearly-stated reading program, there needs to be a general overall statement that shows: (1) the nature of reading as learning, (2) the reading expectations of the local community from which the student comes, and (3) the role of reading for an individual student within that culture. The educational outcomes expected from the students should be stated as broad goals of the district philosophy of reading. These broad goals serve as a guide within which specific curriculum decisions are made. The philosophy of a district sets the scope and limits for what is to be included in the reading program's specific instructional strategies, methods and materials. In sum, a philosophy of reading instruction provides a common, consistent focus for the many activities which are considered as the reading program.

2. ***Topic:*** Curriculum

Standard

There shall be a clearly stated, written curriculum, which specifies general strands in reading such as word recognition skills, vocabulary development skills, comprehension skills, study and locational skills, reading rate and oral reading skills. Within each strand there should be a sequential listing of skills that identifies goals for students by specific performance objectives. This scope and sequence of skills can be used as the basis for a developmental program as well as for corrective and/or remedial programs.

Rationale

A clearly stated, written curriculum allows a district: to tailor its reading program to local needs; to ensure that the staff understands the content and scope of the program; to direct purchasing of materials for specific curriculum needs; to accomplish program planning; and, to ensure a balanced instructional program.

3. ***Topic:*** Instruction

Standard

There shall be continuous, direct and sequential instruction in reading at all levels and in all subject areas. It should be based upon a clearly stated, written statement of the district's program, which implements the reading curriculum. Such a statement shall contain diagnostic procedures and time allocations and the special services provided by the district.

Rationale

Success in reading is a developmental process. Therefore, continuous, direct and sequential reading instruction is necessary at all levels and in all subject areas. A reading program that is learner-centered views achievement as attainment of student reading abilities. An effective program to ensure achievement of the goals in reading provides for: (1) an adequate amount of time for instruction in reading at both the elementary and secondary level; (2) varied instructional approaches to meet the many different needs, interests, abilities and experiences which children bring to the reading process; (3) adequate facilities and flexible grouping patterns; (4) appropriate instructional materials and approaches for particular student needs; and (5) a coordinated program through a unified system of reporting, recordkeeping and skills instruction.

A key to the success of instruction is the development of positive teacher attitudes toward students as reflected in approaches and expectations.

4. ***Topic:*** Evaluation

Standard

There shall be an ongoing system of assessment at all levels of instruction which traces the reading performance of the students and the success of the instructional program in the attainment of the specified goals of the reading curriculum. Assessment should also be made periodically of the community's values and concerns to ensure that the goals and objectives of the reading program are reflecting these.

Rationale

Assessment of the reading program has to be an ongoing process that allows the teachers, administrators and students to determine whether: (1) the broad goals and specific objectives of a district's reading program are being accomplished and (2) the staff is effectively implementing instruction. As a result of the assessment procedures, modifications may be necessary to strengthen the reading program.

In addition, it is recognized that a program has to reflect in its educational philosophy, in its goals and in its specific objectives, those changes that occur in the values of the community and the needs of the student population. Assessment of the reading program, therefore, has to allow a school district to evaluate how it is moving toward attaining its goals and whether its goals are still applicable.

5. ***Topic:*** Special Services

Standard

There shall be special diagnostic and instructional services provided by qualified reading personnel for all students (K-12) who require special help in reading, such as children with reading/learning disabilities and students who fail to achieve in accordance with their academic potential. Additional special reading services should be provided to speakers of divergent dialects, speakers of English as a second language, as well as for those students deemed gifted and talented and those college-bound.

Rationale

All students in the school district should have the right to reading instruction that meets their particular needs. Whenever those needs are extraordinary or exceptional, the students are entitled to help or assistance from qualified professionals who are trained to provide diagnostic and specialized instructional services in reading. Students with reading/learning disabilities and other students who fail to achieve in accordance with their academic potential need an indepth analysis of their reading performance. Recommendations for instruction in reading should accompany the analysis. Such recommendations should take into consideration the nature of reading problems and the manner in which students most effectively learn.

Students with reading problems are identified usually by discrepancies between their actual performance in reading and their expected performance. When their expected performance on a standardized reading test is lower by an average of .5 school year in grades one and two, 1.0 school year in grades three and four and minimally 2.0 in grades five and above, students may be considered to be in need of special diagnosis and instruction by qualified reading personnel. It is hoped, however, that methods of early detection in the developmental program will reduce this need.

Speakers of divergent dialects and speakers of English as a second language need special instruction that does not in any way detract from their primary dialect or language. Gifted, talented and college-bound students are entitled to instruction that will foster their inquiry and stimulate them to ever increasing interests in keeping with their abilities and talents.

6. *Topic:* Reading Specialists

Standard

The school district shall employ reading specialists whose training meets or exceeds the requirements set by the New York State Department of Education and the International Reading Association. These specialists shall be responsible for: (1) intensive diagnostic services, (2) remedial and corrective instruction, (3) resource services to the administrators and teachers and (4) facilitation and coordination of the entire reading program.

A minimum number of such specialists might include: (1) a district coordinator or director of reading and (2) special reading teachers sufficient in numbers to service a workable unit such as a school building or a public population of 300-500 students, or a remedial/corrective student load of 30-40 students.

Rationale

Despite the best efforts of administrators and teachers in terms of diagnostic/prescriptive instruction and the provision of materials, some students for various reasons, such as poor attendance, learning disabilities, or emotional problems, fail to achieve adequately in the regular instructional program. These students require intensive diagnosis, instruction in addition to the classroom program, and specialized instructional and motivational techniques in order that they acquire minimum abilities and/or achievement in accordance with their academic potential. The services of a reading specialist are essential to meet such needs.

While it is recognized that the implementation of the reading program is largely carried out through the regular classroom and that the value of the building administrator in guiding and supervising reading instruction is unquestioned and necessary, it is also a school district's obligation to identify one person to coordinate the total reading program, K-12. By reason of specialized training and experience in the field of reading, this coordinator or director of reading has the responsibility for the development and implementation of the reading program and its goals in all areas and at all levels, based upon the philosophy of the district.

7. ***Topic:*** Classroom Staff Competencies

Standard

There shall be demonstrated competency by all classroom teachers in all phases of reading instruction -- assessment of pupil needs, planning of learning activities which meet these needs, evaluation of achievement, organization and management of the learning environment to facilitate learning -- and in addition, the possession of a caring attitude and the conviction that all children can learn to read.

Rationale

The key to the success of the reading program rests largely with the regular classroom teacher, since the greatest proportion of instruction is carried out in the regular classroom situation. In terms of financial accounting, school districts would benefit from objective selection procedures in hiring teachers at all levels who have a strong background in the theory and practice of reading education, and in giving greater emphasis to ongoing inservice education and staff development.

8. ***Topic:*** Staff Development

Standard

There shall be an ongoing program of professional development and inservice training for all school personnel in the district to improve reading instruction at all levels.

Rationale

Pre-service training provides a broad theoretical foundation for teaching. The continued development and extension of teaching skills in reading for elementary and secondary teachers necessitates specific training for them once they assume their teaching responsibilities.

Having the teaching skills which provide for basic reading instruction is obviously of prime importance. Less evident, but of equal importance, are skills for the teaching of reading in the content areas. The reading demands on students increase and expand during their later school years. Het, staff members at these levels usuall/ receive little training in the reading process. School districts should outline and implement ongoing inservice programs for all teachers.

Such inservice programs for professional development allow school districts to: (1) develop a unified, goal-oriented approach specific to that district's needs; (2) update teachers in approaches, methods and materials; and (3) continue staff cooperation and unity, as well as direction, in program development.

9. ***Topic:*** Budget

Standard

There shall be a specific budget for each component of the reading program reflecting the importance of reading instruction within the total curriculum.

Rationale

Since reading is a priority area in most districts and an essential skill for nearly all activities in the educational program, the budget should have funds allocated for specific components of the reading program: the basic developmental instructional component in the elementary school; the integrated functional content component in the secondary school; the special services component of corrective and remedial reading involving reading and other special services personnel at all levels; and, the supplementary services and materials related to each of these components.

The place and the importance of the reading program are demonstrated when appropriate budget categories and financial support are clearly specified for each component of the reading program and when a reading specialist is actively involved in all aspects of budget development. By such involvement the reading specialist can help to assure that each component will have the necessary resources and materials to carry out an efficient and effective reading program.

10. Topic: Records and Reports

Standard

The reading program shall incorporate an efficient system of recordkeeping and reporting, including: progress reports for parents; cumulative records for building staff; and group or building reports for central administrators. Such records should be concise and easy to maintain and interpret.

Rationale

A system of reports and records provides a data base necessary for student and program evaluation. As a minimum, the reports and records should contain the following:

Cumulative records (for building staff)

1. methods (used, suggested)
2. materials (used, suggested)
3. skills (acquired)
4. areas needing to be strengthened
5. student reaction to methods and materials
6. achievement scores

Group records (for building and central administration staff)

1. class/group achievement scores
2. report of instructional program components

Parent reports

1. progress on specific skills
2. plans for skill development.

Reports should be based on an individual's progress in relationship tc potential, as well as indicating instructional levels.

RESOURCES

The Standards Committee is continuing the process of developing resources to facilitate the use of the Statement of Standards. Two of the resources that have been completed and are now available are a Checklist, which serves as a companion instrument to the Statement of Standards and an outline of procedures for using the Standards.

A copy of the Checklist and/or the Outline of Procedures is available from the Association's Headquarters.

Other materials that are being considered as resources are the following:

- examples of district philosophies and goals;
- examples of budgeting procedures;
- a selective glossary of terms;
- a selective bibliography;
- sample curriculum outlines; and
- sample evaluation outlines.

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